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ABSTRACT

The Chevak Village Youth Association (CVYA) was developed in a rural Eskimo village (population 520) both to educate youth and to integrate them into functional roles in the community. CVYA is an entirely indigenous youth organization, created and managed by the youth and young adults of the village. It has evolved, in part, as a response to the problems of youth in the village. Until the Hootch Decree in 1976, adolescents left villages during their teenage years to attend boarding schools either in Alaska or in the Lower 48. With the creation of village high schools, communities had to understand and relate to a group of adolescents who had previously gone through adolescence largely at a distance. In addition, the upheavals which have beset Eskimo communities have particularly affected youth who seem to be lost in both the old world which is passing and the new one just coming into being. Functions of CVYA activities are social and/or recreational, economic, community service, and educational; CVYA also encourages participation in organizing and facilitating activities. Involvement in CVYA builds on traditional Eskimo ways to facilitate skill transmission, express character ideas, and provide role models. Six tables summarize the narrative information. (BRR)

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GETTING IT TOGETHER IN CHEVAK
A Case Study of a Youth Organization In a Rural Alaskan Village

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Occasional Paper No. 4
Center for Cross-Cultural Studies
University of Alaska, Fairbanks

JUNE 1982

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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines a youth organization developed in a rural Eskimo village both to educate youth and to integrate them into functional roles in the community. What makes this youth organization unusual is that it is entirely indigenous and self-supporting. It is neither part of a national organization nor is it funded by an outside agency.

The development of this organization in a remote Eskimo village may be viewed as a response to a number of social and economic changes. Eskimo communities have been beset by a wide range of technological, political, social, and economic upheavals during the past fifty years. These changes have altered beyond recognition the traditional values, roles, and institutions of these former nomadic, hunting/fishing people. While such radical changes affect everyone, youth in particular seem at sea both in the old world which is passing and the new one just coming into being.

In Eskimo society--as in the dominant culture--the concept of youth has changed with changing economic and social conditions.[1] While the family was the basic subsistence unit, young people played vital economic roles from a fairly early age. While still teenagers, young men participated fully in hunting and fishing activities. Young women as well as young men also played important secondary economic roles. They were expected to pack water, gather firewood, mouse foods,[2] berries, greens, and bird eggs, assist in food preparation and preservation--particularly at fish camp--and to be available as all-around "go-fers" for their parents and grandparents.

Today, while young people are still expected to perform many of these same tasks, the advent of modern technology, the cash economy, social services and public assistance have altered the economic roles of young and old alike.

Youth of the present generation find themselves with a considerable amount of leisure time--certainly more than the generations of village youth that preceded them.

Part-time and full-time employment is, moreover, very limited.[3] Consequently, there is not enough wage employment for adults who need jobs, much less for youth. While the arrival of television and the construction of village high schools with gymnasiums for sports have relieved somewhat the burden of boredom, many village youth have difficulty finding activities they enjoy. This is particularly true during winter and spring when storms are frequent and fierce.

Limited opportunities for enjoyable leisure time activities is only part of the problem village youth face. Young people are also somewhat confused about the adult roles they are expected to play. On the one hand, their teachers and Native leaders are constantly exhorting them to get the education and training they will need to manage the resources allotted to them by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. On the other hand, parents, elders, and others want them to learn and maintain their language and subsistence lifestyle. While many Native people manage this dual role, young people perceive the conflicts inherent in these divergent expectations as pressure. As one young man said, "If I go to college, my father will be disappointed. I won't be here to help him with his nets and traps. If I don't go, my cousin [a city admin'strator] and my teachers will be disappointed."

This pressure and the lack of fulfilling leisure time activities are exacerbated by the ambiguity that goes with being a youth in any culture.

Adolescents simultaneously must go through the difficult passages of physical maturation and change and psychological development. Youth are bombarded by multiple stimuli that affect their attitudes, aspirations, and self-concepts. The sense of self--so critical to feelings of worth and competence--is as yet fragile. Socially, the constantly shifting alliances and friendships characteristic of adolescent groups afford little in the way of security. In short, physically, psychologically, and socially, youth is, at best, a turbulent and trying period in the lives of most of us.[4]

Taking all of these factors together, it is little wonder that the ambiguity and confusion that Native youth experience has manifest themselves in serious social problems. Suicide rates among young Alaska Natives entering adulthood were alarmingly high and rising steadily. In the period 1965-69, the suicide rate among Alaska Natives in the age range 20 to 24 was 47 per 100,000. From 1970 to 1973, the suicide rate climbed to 170.6 per 100,000. While the result of many factors, this increase in the suicide rate is one extreme manifestation of the difficulties Alaska Native youth face today. Other indications are the high incidence of alcoholism and drug abuse found in the villages and regional center.

For the adults in Native communities, these youth problems seem depressingly resistant to amelioration. Until the Hootch Decree in 1976, adolescents left the village during their teenage years to attend boarding schools either in Alaska or in the Lower 48. With the creation of the village high schools, parents and other community members had to understand and relate to a group of adolescents who had, previously, gone through the trials and errors, rebellion and fads of adolescence largely at a distance. Parents

saw their children only during summer when the exigencies of gathering sufficient food stores for the coming winter preoccupied both. Thus, adult community members were, by and large, unprepared to cope daily with young people and their problems.

In the mainstream western culture, out-of-school activities and organizations are institutionalized and contribute to socializing youth for adult roles. Many youth have after-school, weekend, and summer jobs. Various youth associations--Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, Boys' Clubs, Future Farmers of America and so on--offer educational, recreational, and social activities. In rural Alaska, however, such organizations are simply not relevant. The symbols, values, and activities of these organizations evolved from a culture quite different from that of Native America. Typically, these national youth organizations collapse as soon as the key organizer leaves. Only when the local community has taken over the organization and adapted its form, goals, and activities to the local norms have such organizations taken root.[5]

The Chevak Village Youth Association--the subject of this paper--is, on the other hand, an entirely indigenous youth organization, created and managed by the youth and young adults of the village. It has developed and evolved, in part, as a response to the problems of youth in the village.

In Chevak, as in most villages, leisure time activities for youth are very limited. Many youth pass their leisure time hanging out--either at the "pool hall" or at the store. The pool hall is actually the village recreational center owned by the village corporation. It houses pool tables, pin ball machines, video games, a snack bar, and a hall for dances and roller skating. During weekday evenings young people will typically sit at

the booths talking with their friends or playing cribbage, shoot pool, or play the games. On weekends, the youth gather to dance to the heavy bass beat of disco music. In short, the pool hall is the center of leisure time activities for many of the youth.

The snack bar at the corporation store is another favorite hangout. Young people sit on the stools or at the tables and talk with any of their friends who may happen by. Visiting is another preferred leisure activity. This may involve going to a friend or relative's house to watch T.V., talk, or merely sit quietly. When weather permits and transportation is available, the youth will visit friends or relatives or shop at the store in nearby villages.

For both young men and young women, basketball is a favorite activity. For high school age youth, participation is limited, in the winter and spring, by the gym schedule. During the school year, the village basketball league, open only to non-students, holds practices for men and women's teams four nights per week and games on the weekends. Games are important not only for the participants but for the spectators as well. Inter-leagure and inter-village competition is fierce. During close games, the traditional restraint ascribed to the Eskimo people is shattered by thunderous cheers and the sharp cries of spectators.

For young men, hunting and snowmachining are also favorite activities. While young women also enjoy snowmachining, they rarely get involved in chasing arctic fox or hares or in checking traps, all of which are much enjoyed by the males. These activities are limited to those who have access to a snowmachine and money for gas.

Hanging out, visiting, playing basketball, and snowmachining pretty well exhaust the leisure activities available to youth in Chevak. Not surprisingly, youth become bored with the limited variety of activities open to them. In looking for alternatives, many come in contact with drugs--primarily marijuana--and alcohol, both of which are readily available in the village. Community awareness of this problem translates into support for CVYA as the purveyor of activities which represent constructive alternatives to substance abuse.

Although the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse is a primary goal of the organization, it is by no means CVYA's only objective. Providing opportunities for villagers to gather and enjoy themselves in communal activities is of equal importance. Communal celebrations of major holidays--Christmas, Easter, Mothers Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Halloween, and Thanksgiving--is the intent of many activities. In addition, CVYA sponsors two festivals each year--in March and in August--which are intended not only for Chevakers but for villagers from throughout the area, particularly from the villages of Scammon Bay and Hooper Bay.

Organization of the Paper

What follows is a description of the Chevak Village Youth Association and its activities. In the first section, we review the methodology of the study. We then turn to the content of the study--a description of the village and its history and of the lifestyle of the villagers. In the third section, we examine the structure of the organization itself. Finally, we describe the functions of the activities that the organization sponsors.

This paper is directed to two groups: individuals who are interested

in the educational role and function of youth organizations in culturally different settings; and individuals who see the development of youth organizations in rural Alaskan villages as an alternative to activities which may be unconstructive or even self-destructive.

METHODOLOGY

In the fall of 1980, I travelled to Chevak to talk with the leaders of the Chevak Village Youth Association as part of our study of youth organizations as a "third educational environment." I soon realized that the key to understanding this organization lay in the overall social structure of the village. I chose, consequently, to spend the entire year in the village, observing the organization and supporting my research by teaching in the village school.

In November, elections for the Board of Directors of the Chevak Village Youth Association were held. I was nominated and subsequently elected to the Board. This provided me with a unique vantage point from which to observe the organization--as well as with an enjoyable opportunity to work with the young adults and youth of the village. For the next seven months, I participated in all of the organization's activities from board meetings and bull sessions to setting up and participating in events. I found myself cooking for an Elder's dinner, helping to arrange speakers for conferences on alcoholism and youth leadership, selling tickets for a carnival, setting up displays of arts and crafts, and participating in a host of other activities.

At the same time, I tried to answer certain questions about the organization and its activities: What was the role of the organization in the village? Why did this organization work when attempts to organize youth groups in other villages have failed to take root? To what extent and in what ways was the organization educational?

To answer these questions, I conducted interviews with the leaders in the organization, with village leaders, and with youth and their parents.

In addition, I systematically observed all of CVYA's activities, recording my observations on an instrument developed specifically for this project. Finally, I culled through past financial records and board meeting minutes for information on the origins and growth of the organization.

What follows is a detailed description of the village and the organization. Separating out CVYA from other organizations in the village is not an easy task. The lines that separate the responsibilities and activities of one organization from others in more highly specialized and less socially integrated societies were, in Chevak, blurry at best. The organizational actors do not themselves segregate in separate compartments their activities--work, worship, social, recreational, and so on--to the same degree as do we in the "post industrial" world. In the village, an individual's relationships do not change dramatically from one organizational setting to another. He interacts--throughout his life--with the same people at work, at church, at the community center, at the pool hall, and at family gatherings. We have attempted, nonetheless, to look at CVYA-sponsored activities as separate from other institutions in the village. The reader should bear in mind that this is a somewhat artificial separation.

CONTEXT

Setting

The village of Chevak is located on a bluff that rises above the Ninglikfak River some 18 miles inland from the Bering Sea. Rolling hills lead away from the river to the north while to the south and west the tundra runs nearly flat to the sea. Situated in the Calista Region, the village's closest neighbors are Scammon Bay and Hooper Bay, both coastal communities. The three villages share numerous consanguineous relations.

The present village site has been occupied since 1950. Previously, the village was located at a site called Old Chevak which lies some ten miles southwest of the present village. Flooding caused by storm tides forced the villagers to relocate. A still earlier site, known as Kashunuk, lies further south. The move from Kashunuk to Old Chevak seems to have occurred just after the Second World War. The location of Old Chevak was determined by how far up the Aphrewnm River barges could travel.

Population

According to the city administration, the population of Chevak in 1980 was 520. This represents an increase of 34 percent above the 1970 U.S. Census figure of 387. Of the 23 inhabitants who were non-Native, 17 are Anglo school teachers. In 1980, the school population was 158 in grades K-12. This represents 31 percent of the population.

Religion

Nearly everyone in the village is Catholic. Missionaries of the Catholic Church have been in the area from at least as early as the 1920's. Chevak

presently has a church and a priest who also serves the village of Newtok.

Language

The primary language of the village is a dialect known as Cup'ik. Only the villagers of Chevak speak this dialect of Yup'ik. English is spoken as a second language by virtually all villagers under the age of 40 and by some of the older villagers as well. Unlike some Yukon villages where English is supplanting Yup'ik as the primary language of the young, in Chevak Cup'ik remains the everyday language of the people.

Employment

Year-round employment is limited. The largest employer is the Kashunamiut School District which employs 31 full-time teachers, aides, and workers of whom 17 are Anglos. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is responsible for the maintenance of the school and teacher housing, employs an additional 5 individuals.

The Chevak Company Corporation, which operates the general store, the hardware store, and the recreation hall, is the next largest employer with 26 full-time positions. The city administration provides 13 jobs, the post office 1, the health clinic--administered by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation--3, the Head Start program 3, and the two small general stores 2. The total number of full-time positions is 81, sixteen of which are funded through CETA. In the summer, the number of jobs is augmented by construction projects which provide from 5 to 10 additional positions, by firefighting jobs and, during the past two years, by the Summer Youth Employment Program.

A new source of cash income is commercial herring fishing. Ten boats

from Chevak joined others from Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay for the herring run in May 1981. A cooperative, organized among the three villages with assistance from the Alaska Native Foundation, provides loans to purchase outboard motors, nets, and kits from which co-op members build their boats. If, as appears likely from early reports on the herring harvest, the venture proves profitable, commercial fishing could become an important source of income for villagers. As commercial fishing "partners" are nearly identical with the pattern of association among consanguial kin in subsistence fishing, this new form of enterprise may be viewed as an outgrowth of traditional food gathering activities.

Subsistence Activities

Most villagers participate in subsistence activities throughout the year whether or not they have a job in the wage sector. The annual cycle of subsistence sets the rhythm of life in the village. In the fall, activities include bird and seal hunting and subsistence fishing. Birds taken include geese, ducks, swans, cranes, and ptarmigan. The numberous lakes, sloughs, rivers, and marshes in the area make it an ideal bird nesting ground: The Chevak area has been called the greatest goose nursery in North America.[6] Fish most commonly taken include blackfish, flounder, whitefish, tomcod, pike--from nearby Kusilvak Mountain--and salmon. Fall is also the season for gathering the tall, strong grasses from Hooper Bay that women will weave into baskets with characteristic butterfly decorations. These are sold to tourists and the Anglo teachers to generate additional cash incomes.

In the winter, hunting and trapping are limited to fur-bearing animals including mink, weazels, otter, muskrat, Arctic fox and red fox. The mink

of the area are unusually large and, in recent years, prolific. Trapping mink and selling their pelts provides additional income for about fifteen families. Blackfish traps set under the ice in deep sloughs supply some fish throughout the winter.

Springtime brings back both the birds and, as the ice on the coast breaks up, seals and walrus. Seal hunting is the major source of excitement for the young men of the village in March. Camping in canvas tents along the coast, the hunters spend hours threading among ocean-liner size icebergs scanning the choppy waters for the sleek heads of the seals to emerge for air. This is still exclusively a male domain and even the young hunters with "modern" educations look askance at women's visits to camp. Traditionally, the seal were thought to be offended by the presence of women at seal camp.

By late April or early May, as the snow disappears from the tundra, the birds return. Snowmachine travel is difficult and dangerous at this time of melting ice, so many hunters walk out to take the geese and ducks with shotguns. Women walk the spring tundra as well, searching for eggs and tundra greens.

During summer, when the river ice has broken up and school is out, many families travel by boat down the rivers to their traditional fish camps. The fish taken with gill nets are cut up and dried for use during the lean winter months. In August, families may move again, this time to berry camp where they harvest blueberries, salmon berries, cranberries, and blackberries, returning to the village for the opening of school.

It is difficult to establish the economic importance of these subsistence activities. Given the relatively few jobs available in the wage sector and the

high prices for foodstuffs in the stores, it appears that subsisistence is vital. This is reflected in the intent that CVYA has shown in helping to maintain subsistence skills. During the current year, CVYA applied for and was granted funds by the Alaska Council for the Arts to hold workshops for traditional skills such as blackfish trap-making and sled-building.

Income[7]

With few jobs available in the wage sector, average family incomes are low. Although it is difficult to determine income figures precisely, we can indicate an approximate level. According to the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) which administers federal programs such as CETA in the Calista Region, annual per capita money income for the residents of Chevak is in the range of $2000 to $3000. Another index of the poverty of the region is the eligibility status of all students in the school district for both the school lunch program and Title I. According to the Census Bureau's estimates for 1977, per capita money income from all sources for Chevak was 34 percent of the estimate for the state as a whole, 30 percent of the estimate for Anchorage, and 54 percent of the estimate for the nation.[8] Using food stamp eligibility standards, we find that in April 1981, 27 households containing 141 individuals--or 27 percent of the total village population--qualified for food stamps. For the average Chevak family of 5 persons, the maximum allowable income standard is $1025 per year. Thus, roughly a quarter of the households in the village have annual cash incomes of $1025 or less.

Incomes are supplemented by a variety of public assistance programs. Typical of the levels of public aid coming into the village monthly are the

following figures for May 1981:

Program	Villagers Served	Total Funding
Aid to Families with Dependent Children	47 families	$12,883
Aid to the Permanently Disabled	16 individuals	1,858
Old Age Assistance	12 individuals	1,424

The level of assistance from the Food Stamp Program was noted above. General assistance payments to recipients in the Bethel area, consisting of 57 villagers was just under $1 million in 1980-81.

It is important to remember that dollars in Chevak buy less--on the average roughly 25 percent less--than do dollars in Anchorage. For example, a new snow machine costs 20 percent more in Chevak; gas and stove oil costs 50 percent more; and a loaf of bread may cost up to 80 percent more. High transportation costs for goods exacerbates the relative poverty of the village.

Despite this poverty, the young people of Chevak have created an organization which is a virtually self-sufficient economic entity. While CVYA receives a small grant--$2,500 in 1980--from the city, the bulk of its $40,000 annual operating budget is generated by the organization. Most of the money that is earned through various activities--bingo, snack bar, gate receipts from basketball games, and so on--is returned to the village through CVYA's activities; a portion leaves the village to pay for supplies.

Government

In 1967, Chevak was incorporated as a second-class city.[9] The mayor heads a City Council composed of seven members elected by the village. The city uses revenue sharing funds from the state to provide certain public services including police protection, telephone service, a small library, and

parks and recreation. Funds for parks and recreation are channelled to the Chevak Village Youth Association. The city raises additional revenues to finance services through a 2 percent sales tax.

In response to the Indian Self-Determination Act (PL93-638) of 1975, a Traditional Council was formed as the tribal association recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The Council may apply for and, if granted, administer educational and social service programs.

In 1980, the Council, exercising its self-governing rights under the Indian Self-Determination Act, contracted with the BIA to run the village school. The Council, functioning as the school board, thus became responsible for the educational policy and program, the staffing, and the financial management of their elementary and high schools.

A third governing body in the village is the Board of Directors of the village corporation--Chevak Company Corporation (CCC). Under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, CCC is entitled to 138,240 acres of federal lands. When these lands are conveyed, CCC will hold title to the subsurface rights. CCC will in turn convey 1,280 acres of its lands to the Municipality of Chevak.

All Native villagers are shareholders in CCC. The Board sets policy for the Corporation's enterprises such as the general store, the hardware store, and the recreational hall. All shareholders are eligible for election to the Board. A shareholders meeting is held at least once a year.

A few observations on these governing boards may indicate the organizational complex of which CVYA is a part. All three of the bodies described above are active, meet regularly, and are regarded with respect by the villagers. The average age of members of the three boards is 32 while at least one

elder serves on two of the three boards. Self-government in Chevak is no longer merely a goal; it is a reality. Four years of planning and negotiation went into the assumption of control over the school. Although the school may have benefitted more economically by joining the Lower Yukon REAA, villagers preferred local control to more resources.

The creation of the Chevak Village Youth Association may be viewed as another example of the initiative villagers show for local control. An entirely indigenous institution, CVYA was started by a local youth who wanted to control their own recreational activities. As one person in the village put it, "People here in Chevak are concerned with a youth organization in which youth do things for themselves. They are big on self-reliance." While there is a lot of talk about local control in rural Alaska, the villagers of Chevak have manifest their desire for self-determination less through rhetoric and more through action.

THE ORGANIZATION

History and Stability of the Chevak Village Youth Association (CVYA)

Although CVYA was not incorporated until 1976, its origins may be traced back to the mid 60's. At that time, two individuals--Frank Chayalkun and Peter Atchak--set up a "coffee house" in the generator room of the BIA school. The principal teacher at that time permitted the boys to decorate the room in the fashion of the times: "We painted flowers and slogans on the walls--like 'Love' and 'Peace." Frank borrowed a coffee pot from home and small groups would gather to drink coffee and listen to the radio.

The effort was short-lived. The elders regarded the "coffee house" with suspicion--"They considered it a 'sin center' for youth." At the same time, BIA administrators in Bethel caught wind of what was happening and ordered their maintenance personnel to restore the generator room to its original state.

During the late 1960's, young people who were students at St. Mary's Mission School on a tributary of the lower Yukon River organized the Young People's Club which functioned during the summer months when students returned from various boarding schools around the state. The Young People's Club was not autonomous:

> It was controlled by the senior citizens. Everything we wanted to do had to be approved by the Village Council. Everything was controlled and OK'd by the Council--and they wanted to know everything that went on--who would be there, when it would end, etcetera.

The Young People's Club put on skits, talent shows, dances and movies. They

also performed community service projects such as cleaning up the village and doing housework and chores for village elders who did not have young people around the house to help them. Although the club provided activities and entertainment for the village as a whole, it was not funded by the Village Council: "We had to raise our own money for everything we did."

The Young People's Club was succeeded, in 1974, by the "Action Group." Initially, the Action Group consisted of thirteen members, most of whom were or had been students at St. Mary's Mission High School. The group had officers and held regular meetings. Members who missed three meetings in a row were purged from the roll. To generate start-up funds, the group raffled off a sofa-chair from the store.

From 1974 to 1976 when CVYA was incorporated, the Action Group sponsored a variety of activities. At Halloween, they showed movies, put together a "haunted house," and had games. They raised money to bring village students home from St. Mary's for the Christmas holidays. They donated money to hold movies for the whole village and to decorate the church at Christmas. They also held community birthday parties. At Thanksgiving, they prepared a dinner and at Christmas they sponsored a gift exchange and prepared food baskets for families.

The minutes from the meetings of the Action Group reveal a sensitivity to the opinions of the village members--"We may be rejected by the people so we should let them know we mean to be service to the people,"--and an unsuccessful attempt to get financial backing from the City Council--"They said--'We already have Parks and Recreation Department. We don't need to support [the Action Group]."

The Action Group firmly established the idea that a youth organization should not only serve the youth but the whole village as well.

> The Action Group had something for everyone. They had bingo. They were finally approved for games of chance by the City Council.

They also sponsored an annual festival--EXPLO '74 and EXPLO '75--which was the forerunner of the annual Tundrafest now sponsored by CVYA.

In 1976, Frank Chayalkun, co-founder of the early "coffee house" and at that time a Councilman, sat down with some of the young people involved in the Action Group to organize "something that will stand, that will be supported . . . a lasting organization." Three former members of the Action Group signed the incorporation papers and the Chevak Village Youth Association, Inc., a non-profit organization, was born. At the beginning, the organization suffered through an identify crisis: "At first, the 'youth' part [of the title] threw people off. We spent a year to educate the young people that it wasn't just for kids."

Key organizational actors maintain that the most critical factor in achieving legitimacy was "impressing two groups--the city government and the elders in the community." That the organization had sufficiently impresses these groups was apparent from a resolution passed by the City Council in 1979 turning the Parks and Recreation program over to CVYA. Two of the elders sat on this council.

We can see from this brief history that CVYA is the culmination of earlier efforts to organize youth. Many of the activities that CVYA sponsors today were first put on by earlier groups--Tundrafest, holiday celebrations, and bingo. All efforts were initiated and carried out by youth on their own.

The community-wide support and legitimacy that CVYA enjoys today have developed, in part, from the activities of earlier organizational efforts.

Organizational Structure

The formal structure of the organization closely resembles that of non-profit organizations in the majority culture. Policy-making and planning are carried out by a Board of Directors composed of seven members elected annually. The Board meets regularly each month and frequently has one or more special meetings monthly. For special events--such as Winterfest and Tundrafest--the President of the Board will appoint a special subcommittee for planning. Board members are unusually active in implementing their own plans (table 3).

At first glance, it seems that the village has merely adopted a form of organization developed in Western societies. But we may speculate that, in fact, the "Board of Directors" concept is simply a variation on a traditional Cup'ik form of corporate decision-making. Perhaps as recently as fifteen to twenty years ago, elders in the village would gather in the Kaygiq--a large mud structure where the men took fire baths. In the Kaygiq, the elders literally sweated it out as they discussed issues which were of concern to the whole village. Each individual could express his opinion and the discussion would continue until a consensus was reached. Thus, both authority and planning were shared among the elders.

Although the CVYA Board of Directors has a President and meetings are conducted in a parliamentary manner, all the members have equal authority in planning, in setting the agenda, and in discussions. Board members actively seek to feel out their fellow members and to compromise so as to reach

consensus. The vast majority of the Board's decisions are reached unanimously. Indeed, on only one voice vote during the eight month period of observation did the Board fail to reach unanimity.

The Executive Director is a locally hired individual whose primary responsibility is to ensure that the Board's policies and plans are implemented. He or she is present at all meetings of the Board and reports to the Board monthly on the organization's finances. According to individuals who have served as Executive Director, at least half of the Director's time is devoted to maintaining CVYA's accounts. The Executive Director is paid, in part, from funds allocated by the City Council for Parks and Recreation and, in part, from revenues generated by CVYA activities.

The Director has an Assistant who does much of the "leg" work of the organization. In 1980-81, this individual was a CETA employee. The Assistant supervises the coordinators who, in 1980, were Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) workers. The coordinators may serve as Scout leaders, supervise dances for pre-teens, aid in putting on Tundrafest, and handle some of the organization's paper work.

The City Administrator is, according to the Articles of Incorporation, the "registered agent" for the organization. He provides advice and assistance and acts as an overseer of the organization for the City Council. While the City Council's formal control over the organization is limited to that portion of its activities funded by the $2500 allotted for Parks and Recreation, the Council could, theoretically, intervene if CVYA failed to fulfill its functions. This is unlikely because of the informal consultations that take place among CVYA Board members, the Executive Director, the City Administrator, and Councilmen.

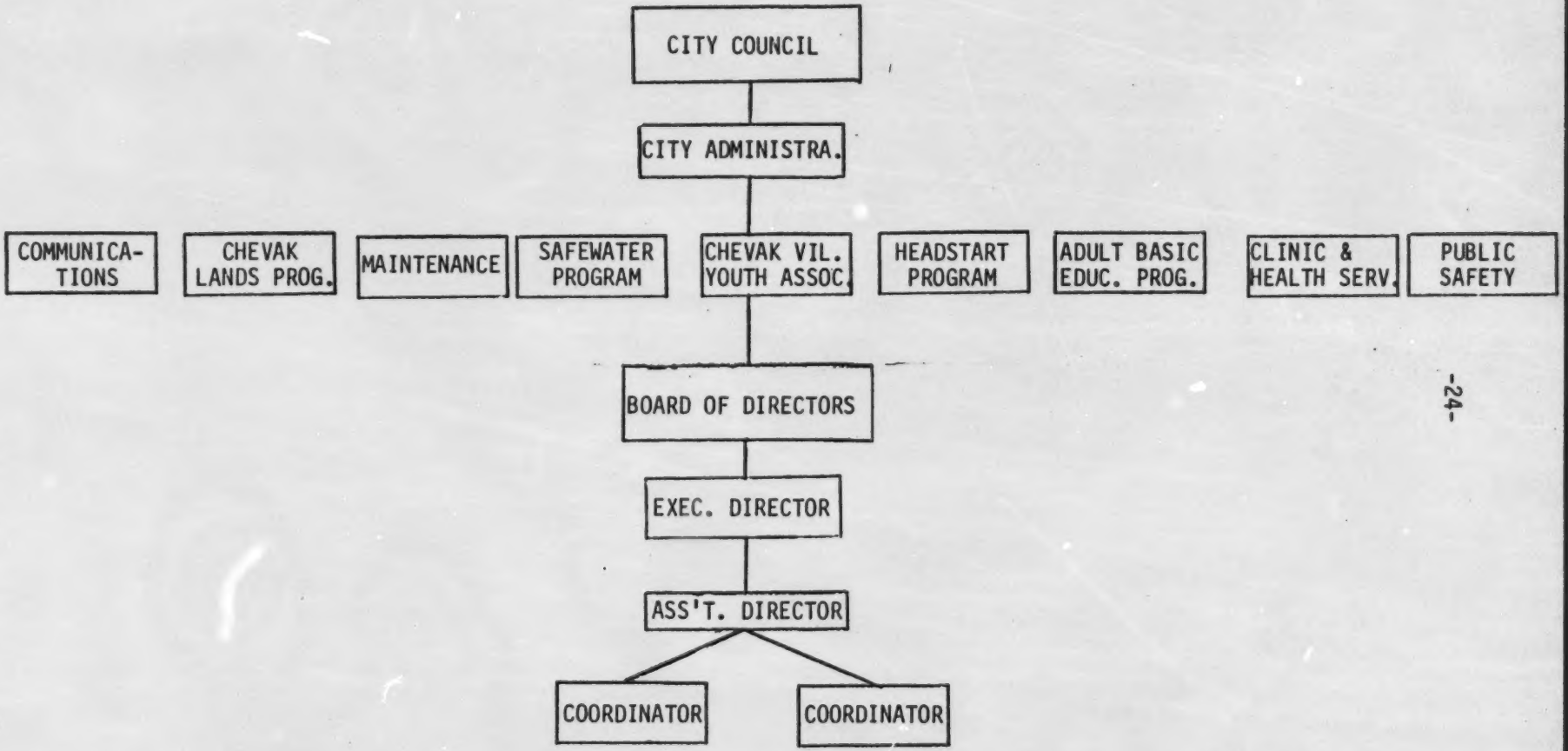
CVYA has no formal membership. Rather, all village youth are considered members. At the same time, an informal group of young people exists that can be counted on to volunteer to help with activities. These young people are predominantly females of high school age. Although CVYA has had membership cards printed, the organization has made no concerted effort to register members. The reason for this may be that, outside of the formal structure, the organization rests on the ideas of voluntary participation and inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness. The current Executive Director put these ideas into the following words: "The youth of Chevak are volunteering. All of them are able to participate in CVYA. . . There are always plenty of people willing to help and volunteer."

Funding

In 1980, CVYA's operating budget was about $40,000. Of this amount, only $2500 is assured. The remainder must be generated by CVYA through its activities. The single largest source of revenue is the village bingo concession. With average monthly receipts of $2450, bingo provides about 75 percent of CVYA's operating funds. Sales of soda pop, snacks, and books and magazines from the CVYA office generate about $350 monthly. During the winter months, gate receipts from basketball games bring in about $300 each month. Other CVYA activities--such as dinners, games, raffles, and dances--bring in another $160 a month. From all sources, average monthly receipts are $3260 during basketball months (November-March) and $2960 during the rest of the year.

The single largest expense for the organization is the Executive Director's salary which, during the period of this study, was $1300 monthly.

FORMAL GOVERNMENTAL AND SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN CHEVAK
AND THE
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CHEVAK VILLAGE YOUTH ASSOCIATION



At this time, however, the organization faced substantial debts from the previous years. To meet these obligations, the Board chose to ask the Director to resign. The revenues for the months from February to April that would have normally been used to pay the Director were applied instead against the outstanding debt. When these obligations were met, a new Director was hired. Other expenses include overhead costs for the CVYA office, purchase of items for sale in the "snack bar", transportation for basketball players traveling to nearby villages for games, supplies for bingo games, prizes for games, and purchases of items for raffles. For the period November 1980 to March 1981, expenses averaged $2600 monthly. As noted above, however, during this period the Board was cutting back on expenses to meet outstanding debts. In addition, the period does not include CVYA's most costly activity--Tundrafest.

From this accounting we see that the organization is, by and large, economically independent, generating funds from the community to pay for activities for the community. An exception to this is a grant of $36,000 that CVYA received from the Rural Development Agency in 1980 to purchase the materials to build a youth center. The building was completed in the Fall of 1981.

Relations with the School

The Kashunamiut (Chevak) School District has its own program of extra-curricular activities which includes social activities and athletics. Students who participate in basketball at the school are ineligible to participate in the City League Basketball sponsored by CVYA. Generally, the school is very supportive of CVYA activities, making available school facilities and equipment for CVYA events. When possible, CVYA reciprocates.

ACTIVITIES

Goals and Purposes of the Organization

Though nominally an organization for youth, the Chevak Village Youth Association serves the entire village community. Functioning as the parks and recreation department of the city, CVYA sponsors events that are primarily social and recreational. These two characteristics distinguish CVYA in clientele served and in function performed from the village school: While the latter is strictly youth-oriented and educational, the former is community-oriented and social/recreational as well as educational. As one of the organization's leaders said, "The main goal of CVYA is to create recreation for the whole village."

Organizational participants also mentioned the educational function of the organization. "[CVYA] prepares young people to be leaders. It gives them a better understanding of the village corporation, how it works, how it's organized," said one. Continuing, he added, "[The youth] also learn how to do things to make it work. Like Barbara [a Board member] is learning how to work with the books [financial records]. It gives them something rather than nothing to do." A former President of the Board of Directors spoke of the need to inform youth and their parents about the effects of alcohol and drug abuse: "CVYA is for education and recreation. The youth don't actually know about the effects of alcohol and drugs. Their parents probably don't know either.

A past Executive Director of CVYA described the goal of the organization as both recreational and educational:

> It's to try to keep them out of trouble, keep them active. It's also teaching skills--like the village history project. The kids do interviews with the elders. In 1978, we sponsored a sixteen-week cultural project and hired older folks to teach young people to sew mukluks, to do ivory carving, wood carving, and sled-making. One other purpose of CVYA is for the youth to plan for themselves, to sponsor their own activities. They work with local government to show them that the young people can manage their own affairs.

From these remarks, we see that CVYA's perceived goals are both recreational and educational. Recreation is viewed as important to relieve boredom: "When they are idle, they get into drugs like marijuana and alcohol." Or as another informant put it, "If they have nothing to do, they turn to other ways to entertain themselves, like drinking or taking drugs." Education is viewed as needed in several areas: first of all, training in organizing and in leadership; secondly, passing on traditional skills; and thirdly, information on the effects of alcohol and drugs.

Functions of CVYA Activities

In analyzing the functions of the 42 activities sponsored by CVYA in the period August 1980 to May 1981, we have found that most events serve more than one function. For example, City League Basketball is recreational for the players and a social occasion for spectators. At the same time, gate receipts provide CVYA with much needed revenue. Finally, basketball is also educational as the young adults and older youth who participate emphasize sportsmanship and teamwork. Similarly, bingo has an important economic function, providing CVYA with revenue and winners with lump capital; it is also the social and recreational highlight of the week for the women

of the village. All of the events observed had at least two functions and a few, like City League Basketball, had as many as four or five.

Social and/or Recreational

Our analysis of CVYA activities bears out the perception that the organization's leaders have of its goals and purposes (table 1). Of the 42 activities observed, all but four were social and/or recreational. The emphasis on recreation reflects the concern of the organization's leaders to offer youth constructive alternatives to boredom and substance abuse. This is of particular importance during the winter and early spring when severe cold and stormy weather restrict outdoor activities. Television reception--at least up to the summer of 1981--is, at best, unreliable and irregular while the routine of hanging out at the pool hall, roller skating, going to movies, and visiting grows old.

The social function of so many of the activities accords with the village social pattern. Individuals seek out opportunities for personal interaction. Visiting is a primary social activity year-round. Young people hang out at the pool hall to be with their friends. Hunting, fishing, and food gathering activities in general are carried out in pairs, groups, or family units. Solitary activities are rare.

Typical of recreational and social activities sponsored by CVYA are City League Basketball for men and women, both Western and Eskimo dances, dinners, games, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Many of these activities are clustered around holidays--Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day and Independence Day. CVYA, in addition, holds two festivals annually that have now become village traditions:

Winterfest in March and Tundrafest in August. These festivals include games, athletic events, dances and dinners. After five years of operation, CVYA has developed a regular, almost ritualized cycle of events. Indeed, 36 of the 42 events held during the period of observation had been held in previous years.

Economic

That well over half of CVYA activities have economic functions reflects the need of the organization to generate its own operating funds. Weekly bingo games at the Community Hall provide most of the organization's revenues. The women of the village turn out in large numbers for the chance to win prizes of from $20 to $35, to enjoy the company of other women, and to have an evening away from home. As participants stand to win as much as $35 for an investment of less than 10¢ per card, bingo games also represent a source of lump capital for village women. During Tundrafest, one jackpot can reach several hundred dollars.

Arts and craft shows, held during Christmas, Tundrafest, and Winterfest, offer craftsmen the opportunity to sell their handicrafts and art work while CVYA earns a small commission on sales. Craftwork is displayed at the City offices, giving visitors, villagers, and white school teachers the chance to buy. Baskets, masks, ivory carvings, ulus, dance fans, mukluks, seal skins, bead work, and knitted items are commonly displayed. CVYA also offers cash prizes for the best craftwork in each show.

CVYA also runs a year-round "snack bar" at the City Offices, selling soft drinks, candy, paperbacks, magazines and comics. Games--held at the Community Hall--at holiday times include dart throw, ring toss, musical chairs,

trip to Jerusalem, sack races, and so on. These games offer prizes to contestants and provide CVYA with some revenue.

Community Service

Nearly a third (31 percent) of CVYA activities provide some kind of community service. Such services include the arts and crafts shows described above, arranging a gift exchange (Kris Kringle) and gift wrapping at Christmas time, honoring senior citizens with a dinner and free passes to community activities, and sponsoring Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. These latter activities differ somewhat from their urban counterparts: Scouting in Chevak places less emphasis on formal organizational ceremony and more on outdoor activities and community service such as Clean-Up Day and assisting the elders.

Educational

Another third of CVYA activities are educational in function. The most explicitly educational activities are the Youth Conferences held annually during Tundrafest and Winterfest. Outside speakers who are closely identified with issues relating to youth are invited to address these gatherings. One of the primary goals of the conferences is to disseminate information on youth organizations to visitors from other villages. Although youth from other villages in the region attended these meetings in the past, during the period of observation the audiences were exclusively from Chevak. While other villages indicated an interest in attending, the cost of transportation has proved prohibitive.

Another explicitly educational event was the Alcoholism Awareness Day, held for the first time during Winterfest in March. Alcoholism counselors from Chevak and Napaskiak spoke to an audience of about 25 following a film

presentation. Plans to perform a skit written by one of the Board members failed to materialize.

In addition to these explicitly educational events, participating in planning and organizing events teaches youth how to plan, organize, and work in cooperation with others. During both Tundrafest and Thanksgiving, for example, youth were invited to volunteer to assist in running games. The volunteers had to gather the materials needed for the games, set them up in the Community Hall, get prizes from the Executive Director, run the games, insure that they had a replacement if they had to leave or wished to take a break, and collect money or tickets. Many also stayed afterwards to help clean up.

That some learning takes place seems evident from exchanges such as the following with one of the young Board members who frequently assumed responsibility for organizing events:

> "How did you get involved with CVYA?"
>
> "Well, I just used to help out with things--games, dances, things like that--when I started high school here."
>
> "Did that experience help you when you got on the Board?"
>
> "Probably I knew something about how to get people to do things, where to go to get started. Yeah, if I didn't do that before, I wouldn't want to try to do things now. Maybe I got to know I could do it.

This informant apparently not only learned the mechanics of organizing but, perhaps more importantly, gained confidence in her ability to carry out her plans.

This process of learning could be observed over the course of the year. One young female who had become involved because of her friendship with one of the Board members had, by the end of the year, taken a position as a coordinator for CVYA. Both her confidence and her competence had increased. While these changes could not be attributed solely to her participation in CVYA activities, we could speculate that her CVYA experience contributed to these changes.

Other activities such as the Eskimo dances and the arts and crafts shows offered youth the chance to learn more about their own culture and traditions. Young people learn to dance by watching their elders and imitating them. The dances themselves tell about how subsistence activities were carried out in earlier times. Arts and crafts shows give young people the chance to see the products of craft skills. Finally, traditional values such as respect for elders are exemplified by activities such as the Senior Citizen Dinner. Young people helped prepare and serve food while others sang to provide entertainment during the show. That the educational component of these activities and others is implicit rather than explicit is appropriate in a culture where learning by observation rather than by direct instruction has been the tradition.

From our analysis of CVYA sponsored events, we see that most (90 percent) had some recreational and/or social function. More than half (60 percent) had some economic function. A third (31 percent) provided some community service and a third (33 percent) were either explicitly or implicitly educational. Thus, the organization's leaders' perceptions of what CVYA was intended to do accords well with what it actually does.

Youth Participation in Organizing and Facilitating Activities

The key organizational actor in organizing and carrying out activities is the Executive Director. He and the Assistant Director helped to organize 33 of the 42 activities observed--or 79 percent (table 2). Members of the Board of Directors, though formally policy makers and planners, were involved in organizing half of CVYA's activities. Youth who were not members of the organization's formal structure participated in organizing 20 of the 42 activities--or 46 percent. Non-youth organizers of activities were limited almost exclusively to Eskimo dances which are run by the elders. What is important here is the unusually active role that members of the Board of Directors play in organizing events and the virtually total control that youth and young adults have over the direction and organization of activities.

Organizing an activity involves some or all of the following tasks: planning; assembling, ordering, or purchasing needed supplies or equipment; arranging for a location; communicating with participants; preparing the location for the event; enlisting and assigning tasks to volunteer facilitators; overseeing volunteers and "trouble-shooting" during the event; and financial accounting for the event. Often a Board member or the Executive Director would assume responsibility for a given activity. He or she would then enlist youth to assist in organizing the activity. The organizational actor would meet informally with the volunteers. He or she would say, "We're going to have a dinner for Thanksgiving. Somebody needs to pick up turkeys from the store and get them ready to go in the oven." One of the volunteers would take on the task. Another would take responsibility for arranging the school cafeteria. On the day of the event, organizational actors would

be present to help solve problems that might arise but arrangements and sequence of tasks would be worked out by the organizing youth.

Facilitators we defined as individuals who got involved with an event after it is already organized and underway. Extending the example of Thanksgiving Dinner above, we include as facilitators those participants who arrived in time to help serve the meal, get tea for diners, and bus the tables afterwards. Our analysis of events reveals that the composition of facilitators is similar to that of organizers (table 2). Youth acted as facilitators for over half (55 percent) of the 42 activities observed. The Executive Director and Assistant Director and the members of the Board acted as facilitators at about a quarter of the events: The former were facilitators for 23 percent of the activities while the latter served as facilitators for 26 percent.

Altogether, youth who were not members of the formal organizational structure were involved as organizers or facilitators at 27 of the 42 observed activities (62 percent). This bears out the organizational leaders' judgment that CVYA allows youth the opportunity to organize and run their own activities. The critical role of the Board of Directors is also borne out by our analysis: Members helped to organize half of all the activities and served as facilitators at a quarter.

Looking more closely at the role experience of youth--including the Executive Director, the Assistant Director, and the Board of Directors--we find that the organization gives young people the chance to learn about planning and organizing activities but little opportunity to develop leadership or teaching ability as we have defined these roles (for definitions, see notes to table 3). In 39 of 42 events (92 percent), youth served as planners and/or organizers. As operators/facilitators, youth participated in 27 of the 42

events (57 percent). In only two activities did youth serve as leaders and as teachers in only one. As active participants in a cooperative activity, youth gained role experience in 15 events (36 percent). Such experiences including serving as officials and monitors at basketball games and tournaments, preparing dinners, holding games at holiday times, participating in Eskimo dances, and putting on potlucks. Finally, as passive recipients of information, youth participated in five events (12 percent). These events were Eskimo dance, the Youth Conferences, and the Alcoholism Awareness Day.

These results appear to be consistent with the ethos of the village. Leaders are expected to lead not by command or directives but rather by suggestion and example. Outsiders who visit a village are sometimes surprised by what they perceive to be a lack of organization; events just seem to "happen" and no one appears to be in charge. What is actually happening is often quite different. Villagers are very familiar with one another's mannerisms and behavior. They convey their plans, intentions, and needs in a manner which is frequently nonverbal and not easily read by outsiders. Individuals tend to share rather than accrue authority.

As our analysis indicates, CVYA allows youth the opportunity to participate in planning and organizing activities for themselves and for other members of the community. That opportunities for role behavior identified as appropriate to a leader or teacher is limited reflects a social and cultural preference for organizational roles which are cooperative rather than directive, demonstrative rather than didactic. The "take charge guy" held up as an ideal in Anglo culture may be scored as "bossy" in the Eskimo culture.

Clientele

When we look at participation rates for different age groups in CVYA events, we can see the total community orientation of the organization (Table 4). Youth participated in more than half of the activities sponsored by CVYA (62 percent). Adults also participated in over half (55 percent) of the activities while children under the age of 14 participated in about a quarter (24 percent) of the 42 activities. CVYA held ten events exclusively for youth, ten exclusively for adults, and three for children. The relatively lower number of activities for children reflects the higher number of unorganized activities--playing on the gym equipment on the school play deck, sledding, ice skating, mouse hunting, mouse-food gathering, visiting, and so on--available to them.

SKILL TRANSMISSION

Skill transmission is the transfer of expert ability or proficiency from one or more individuals to another individual or group. Skill transmission in Eskimo society is usually nonverbal: The learner observes a master closely and then practices the skill.

Of the 42 activities observed, over a third (36 percent) involved the transmission of skills (Table 5). Seven of these activities involved skills which have been traditionally transmitted in the village; three activities involved a skill which is identifiably modern--handling money. Five other activities involved skills which are both traditional and modern.

Eskimo dancing, chanting, and drumming are one group of traditional skills transmitted at CVYA activities. At these dances, youth would observe their elders and some--10 at one dance, 14 at the other--would join in. These dances were particularly interesting, for the observer could see evidence of the process of skill transmission. Young children, some just toddlers, who were present at the dances would move their bodies in rhythm with the drums and imitate the hand movements of the dancers on the stage. Presumably, the youth who participated in the dances had imitated their elders in a similar fashion when children. The youth who actually danced could be seen to observe the elders with whom they were dancing and copy their movements.

Skills which had both traditional and modern application included organizing people for an activity and athletic skills such as agility, coordination, and teamwork. These latter skills were transmitted through City League Basketball. One might speculate that the hand-eye coordination in basketball is particularly relevant to hunting. Conditioning is important

in an environment as harsh and demanding as that of the tundra. Teamwork, which is stressed in basketball, also has subsistence hunting application where hunters go out in pairs or groups.

The transmission of traditional skills is an area that the CVYA Board is attempting to expand. A grant of $10,000 from the Alaska State Council for the Arts will fund classes in carving, sled-building, fish-trap making, and basket weaving for the fall of 1981. The Board also passed a resolution to sponsor the Chevak dancers for such events as the Indian and Eskimo Olympics held in Fairbanks during the summer. Finally, CVYA has been involved in starting a Crafts Cooperative for the village in conjunction with the Alaska Federation of Natives.

CHARACTER IDEAS

The character ideals expressed through CVYA activities are, like the skills transmitted, predominantly traditional. Six activities stressed the importance of young people serving the village while five others exemplified participation in community activities. Assuming responsibility was the ideal expressed in three activities.

Community service was stressed in activities such as the dinners put on by CVYA, the clean-up days held by the Scouts and the gift-wrapping service set up for Christmas. Participation in community activities was the ideal apparent in such activities as the Eskimo dances, the Christmas gift exchange, and the Tundrafest potluck. By encouraging youth to assume responsibility for games at holiday times and at Tundrafest, CVYA also encouraged this as an ideal.

At both youth conferences, the ideal of youth held up was a self-reliant, community-oriented individual equipped with both traditional subsistence skills and modern, academic skills. The Senior Citizens Dinner stressed respect for elders while Alcoholism Awareness Day held up the ideal of sobriety and family responsibility. Finally, the arts and crafts shows exemplified the handicraft tradition of the village.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS ROLE MODELS

As we can see from the above, CVYA's activities are generally not intended to hold up a clearly defined model for young people to emulate as is the case in other cultures with youth organizations such as Boy Scouts. The members of the CVYA Board of Directors, however, may be viewed as models chosen by the community to exemplify its "ideal" of youth and young adults. The members of the Board who already have families of their own may be seen as transitional figures: They represent the "ideal" of youth making the transition to adulthood.

The average age of the Board members for 1980-81 was 26. Two members were female while five were male. Three of the Board members were married and had children. All were high school graduates, two had university degrees, and one other had some college credit. Four were employed full-time in the wage sector, one was a full-time subsistence hunter and fisherman, one was a high school student, and one other a full-time mother and housekeeper.

All were generally acknowledged to be reliable and dependable. They were also recognized as people who got things done. Four had served on the Board previously and one had been instrumental in getting CVYA started and had served on the Board since its inception. None of them had ever had debilitating problems with alcohol or drugs. None were members of any of the other administrative boards in the village--the City Council, the Traditional Council, or the village corporation board.

The composite model that emerges from these Board members is not unlike the model of "ideal" youth in many cultures: responsible, reliable, moderate, popular, educated, respectful of traditions, family and community-oriented.

That this "ideal" so closely resembles the model of youth held up in Anglo culture may not be surprising: The abstract characteristics of individuals that serve to perpetuate the social unit intact are, with small variations, remarkably similar in both Anglo and Eskimo culture. Board members were not, however, such straight arrows that they turned young people off. They were, rather, moderate in their habits. Youth could recognize that they had faced and continued to face many of the dilemmas and pressures that the youth themselves were facing.

CVYA activities allow Board members to interact with a wider range of youth than would be possible without the organization. Youth who volunteer to assist with activities observe Board members and the Executive Director organizing and directing. Board members often assign youth tasks to carry out and, if asked, instructions on how to do it. Thus, activities in which Board members and youth participate together--as in 16 of the 42 activities observed (38 percent)--created personal educational relationships between members and youth who volunteered to assist in organizing or facilitating events. In part because of these personal relationships, a group of high school age youth coalesced to form a cadre of volunteers who could be called upon to assist in carrying out activities. Such a group can also be seen as a pool of involved young people from which future Board members or Directors could be recruited. Generally, this group was composed of high school females in the 15 to 18 age range.

At least one scholar of learning has observed that youth may learn best from those who are just a bit older than themselves.[10] If this is indeed true then the relationships that develop between Board members and slightly younger youth may be the most important educational relationships that CVYA fosters.

CONCLUSION

To return to the theme of youth organizations as alternative educational environments, we can recognize that CVYA is, by intention and in fact, an organization with educational purposes. On the one hand, through the example provided by the Board members and through some of its activities, the organization offers a model of youth consistent with the values of the village: youth who participate in their community, who know and respect the traditions of the village, who are equipped with both traditional and modern skills, and who are capable of initiating and carrying out their own plans. On the other hand, CVYA offers youth the opportunity to experience the actual mechanics of planning, organizing, and managing activities. While measuring what youth do, in fact, learn through CVYA is highly problematic, the very fact that so many youth do choose to participate in its activities and that those who are currently Board members have in the past served the organization as volunteers indicates that some of the ideals CVYA attempts to foster have reached some youth. Whether or not these youth learned these ideals through CVYA would be difficult to sort out.

The educational role of CVYA was perhaps summed up best by a member of the Traditional Council, himself a former member of the CVYA Board: "These are our leaders of the future. They will face challenges to our way of life. CVYA gets them ready for that."

A secondary result of this study was the discovery of certain conditions which seem to favor the success of youth organizations in rural Alaska. Though our evidence does not permit us to draw direct causative relationships between conditions and the organization's success, our investigations do

suggest some interesting and perhaps useful hypotheses.

As we have seen, CVYA evolved from earlier attempts to create organizations that would sponsor activities for youth and other members of the community. These attempts began in the early 1960's, continued into the 1970's, and culminated with the incorporation of CVYA as a non-profit organization in 1976. All of these early efforts were initiated by the young people in the village. Some, though not all, of the youth involved in these organizational attempts were or had been students at St. Mary's Mission High School, a parochial school on the Andreavsky River, a tributary of the Lower Yukon River. The philosophy of education which prevailed at St. Mary's was that students should be fully involved in their education, that they were responsible for creating their own activities.[11] A similar idea seems to have been rooted in the Chevak community. A key actor in the creation of CVYA who had also been involved in earlier attempts to organize the village youth reported that "My parents told me, 'You get things done by doing them. You actually have to do them if you want them to succeed.' I grew up participating in things. Other people involved in CVYA had the same experience growing up." Eight of the young people involved in the "Action Group" from ~~1976~~ 1974 to 1976 were or had been St. Mary's students; six were not. What seems most important here is that the youth were willing to take matters into their own hands, to create an organization for youth.

In light of the proposals to establish youth organizations in the rural areas of Alaska as a way of combating rising rates of suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, this background seems particularly significant. Evolving as it did from young people's own desire to sponsor social, recreational, and community service activites, CVYA was, from its inception, firmly rooted

in the social, historical, and economic conditions of the village. Its structure and processes were shaped by the very conditions out of which it evolved. These observations may explain why organizations which have evolved from very different conditions rarely achieve the kind of success in rural Alaska that CVYA has enjoyed.

Another condition which may have contributed to the stability and success which CVYA has achieved is the organizational complex of the village itself. For reasons which are not at all clear, Chevakers appear to have an unusual capacity for cooperative efforts. Two very concrete examples of this are five canals--one of which is several hundred yards long--which villagers dug with hand tools in the 1950's and 1960's to shorten the distance they had to travel to reach the sea and to connect the major rivers in the area. These efforts were organized and carried out entirely by the villagers. A more recent example of this organizational capacity was the decision by the Traditional Council to contract administrative control of the village schools from the BIA. This was carried out at a time when no other school in Alaska had done so. During the first year of operation under contract, the Traditional Council ran the school in a professional and effective manner that impressed all concerned--villagers, educators, and students alike. In addition to the Traditional Council, both the Chevak Company Corporation board and the City Council are active governing entities. While similar organizations exist in other villages, they often do not display the initiative or willingness to take risks that are common in Chevak.

Finally, there is an unusually cooperative relationship between the young leaders of the village and the elders which has conditioned the development of CVYA. As one young leader who holds positions both on the Traditional

Council and in the village corporation put it, "We've won the elders' trust." Another member of the Traditional Council reported that no major decisions were taken without prior consultation with the elders. This trust has been won fairly recently: Another leader related how the elders had frowned upon the Young People's Club which was organized in the 1960's. It would appear that the success of the Action Group in the mid-1970's contributed to the elders' decision that the youth were to be trused in running not only their own affairs but those of the village as well. The average age of members on the three primary governing boards of the village is 32.

These three conditions--youth-initiated efforts to organize, the presence of an unusual organizational capacity in the village, and a relationship of trust between elders and youth--all appear important in the success of CVYA. The nature of our evidence does not permit us to conclude that these conditions are necessary for a youth organization to succeed in a rural Alaskan setting. But the evidence does indicate that attempts merely to transpose a youth organization which has been successful in one setting to another set of conditions may be at best risky--and at worst a waste of effort and resources.

During the period of this study, CVYA received communications from several villages in Western Alaska who indicated an interest in starting youth organizations similar to CVYA. Our research indicates that resources might best be spent in encouraging these types of indigenous efforts. Indeed, individuals who have been involved with CVYA might be the best resource people available to advise villages which are culturally and socially similar to Chevak on how to get organized and sponsor activities.

TABLE 1

FUNCTIONS OF CVYA EVENTS
(August 1980 to May 1981)

Function[a]	PRIMARY FUNCTION		SECONDARY FUNCTION		TOTAL	
	No. of Events[b] A	% of Events B	No. of Events[c] C	% of Events D	No. of Events[b]	% of Events
Educational	5	12%	9	24%	14	33%
Social	24	57%	11	61%	35	83%
Recreational	32	76%	1	10%	33	79%
Community Service	10	24%	3	9%	13	31%
Economic	12	29%	13	43%	25	60%

[a] Some events had more than one primary and/or secondary function. For example, Eskimo dances were primarily both recreational and social events and, secondarily, educational.

[b] N = 42

[c] N = 42 - A

TABLE 2

ORGANIZERS AND FACILITATORS OF CVYA EVENTS
(August 1980 to May 1981)

	ORGANIZER[a]		FACILITATOR[b]	
	No. of Events[c]	% of Events	No. of Events[c]	% of Events
Executive Director And Assistants	33	79%	10	23%
Board Members	21	50%	11	26%
Youth	20	48%	25	60%
Other	4	10%	0	0

[a] Organizer is one who is involved in planning, arranging, or setting up an event.

[b] Facilitator is one who assists with an event after it is underway.

[c] N = 42; some events involved more than one organizer and/or one facilitator.

TABLE 3

ROLE EXPERIENCE OF YOUTH IN CVYA EVENTS
(August 1980 to May 1981)

	No. of Events[g]	% of Events	Total No. of Youth[h]
Roles			
Leader[a]	2	5%	6
Teacher[b]	1	2%	2
Planner/Organizer[c]	39	93%	66
Operator/Facilitator[d]	27	64%	98
Active Participant in Cooperative Activity[e]	15	36%	108
Passive Recipient of[f] Information	5	12	113

[a] Leader is one who visibly directs, commands or guides others during an event.

[b] Teacher is one who intentionally imparts knowledge, skills, or values to another.

[c] Planner/Organizer is one who plans, arranges, or sets up an event and may include assigning others specific tasks within the event.

[d] Operator/Facilitator is one who assists with the process of an event after it is underway.

[e] Active Participant in Cooperative Activity is one whose involvement in an event requires coordination of efforts with others in the activity.

[f] Passive Recipient of Information is one who does not actively participate in an event but who receives knowledge, skill, or value instruction from the event.

[g] N = 42

[h] These figures represent duplicated counts. That is, some youths may have acted as organizers/planners for more than one event.

TABLE 4

CLIENTELE FOR CVYA EVENTS
(August 1980 to May 1981)

	No. of Events[d]	Total No. Participating[e]	Mean No. At Each Event	Events Exclusively for Each Category[f]
Clientele				
Youth[a]	26	755	31	10
Children[b]	10	244	27	3
Adults[c]	23	453	21	10

[a] Youth are individuals of high school age and single young people up to the age of 32.

[b] Children are individuals 12 years or younger.

[c] Adults are married individuals or single individuals over the age of 32.

[d] N = 42.

[e] Total number of individuals in each category who actually participated in CVYA events in the period August 1980 to May 1981. This does not include onlookers at these events.

[f] Number of events which were attended exclusively by individuals in each category.

TABLE 5

SKILL TRANSMISSION DURING CVYA EVENTS
(August 1980 to May 1981)

Skills Transmitted	No. of Events[a]
Traditional	
Eskimo dancing, chanting, drumming	3
Camping and survival skills	2
Marksmanship	2
Traditional and Modern	
Organizing people	2
Athletic skills (agility, coordination, teamwork)	3
Modern	
Handling money	2

[a] N = 42.

TABLE 6

CHARACTER IDEALS TRANSMITTED BY CVYA EVENTS
(August 1980 to May 1981)

Character Ideals	No. of Events[a]
Traditional	
Community Service	6
Communal sharing and participation in communal activity	5
Handicraft tradition	3
Assuming responsibility	3
Sportsmanship	3
Eskimo as self-reliant; pride in being Eskimo.	2
Respect for Elders	1
Sobriety	1

[a] N = 42.

NOTES

1. As in the majority culture, the term "youth" in the context of an Eskimo village is somewhat ambiguous. Asked to distinguish between "youth" and "adult," informants did, however, acknowledge one critical event: parenting. One 31-year old male said, "Before I was married I was crazy--drinking, smoking, doing crazy things. But I had children and I thought, I never want my children to see me like that, crazy." Another male, 27, who had had his first child told me that he had stopped drinking: "Daniel [his son] shouldn't see that . . . it's no good for him to see his daddy all messed up." An 18-year old, when asked how having a family changed the young men in his village, replied, "Sometimes they hang out, but mostly they try to provide for their families." Thus, starting a family represents for the villagers the watershed between youth and adulthood.

2. Mouse foods are tender young grass roots and shoots stored beneath the tundra by voles during the summer and fall. Dug up, washed, and boiled in seal blood or oil, they are a great delicacy.

3. In 1980, there were approximately 80 jobs for 200 inhabitants over the age of 18 in the village of Chevak where this study was carried out.

4. Jerald G. Bachman, Robert L. Kahn, Martha T. Mednick, Terrence N. Davidson, Lloyd D. Johnston, Youth in Transition: Volume I, ISR, Ann Arbor: MI, 1967, Chapter 1.

5. The author observed such an organization in Gambell on St. Lawrence Island. The 4-H Club, started by a white school teacher, had been taken over by several local adults. Awards, ceremonies, and formal meetings were de-emphasized as social activities, group projects, and community service were correspondingly stressed. Under the direction of a local woman held in esteem by the community, the club attracted village youth with projects such as skin sewing, mukluk making, dog harness construction and repair, and carving.

6. Roger Tory Peterson, Wild America, Houghton Mifflin: New York, 1955, Chapter 33.

7. Income as used here refers only to cash income. Subsistence products are not included. Thus, when we speak of the relative poverty of the village, we are referring to the cash economy only.

8. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "1977 Per Capita Money Income Estimates for States, Counties, and Incorporated Places in the West Region of the United States," Current Population Reports: Population Estimates and Projections. Series p. 25, No. 886, June 1980.

9. For a definition of a second-class city, see Alaska Blue Book: 1977, Third Edition. Robert M. Burnett, Editor. Department of Education, Division of State Libraries and Museums, p. 161.

10. Sol Tax, "Self and Society" in Readings in Education, Charles Merrill: New York, 1973.

11. Judith Kleinfeld, Eskimo School on the Andreafsky, Praeger: New York, 1979.